

M E M O R A N D U M

July 29, 1967

TO: JIM GARRISON, District Attorney

FROM: WILLIAM R. MARTIN, Assistant District Attorney

SUBJECT: FRANCISCO (Frank) BARTES
1608 Mason Smith Avenue
Metairie, Louisiana - Telephone 888-1806

On Thursday afternoon July 20, 1967, MR. FRANCISCO BARTES was interviewed in these offices concerning his connection with Cuban revolutionary organizations and concerning his possible knowledge of facts pertinent to this investigation. On that date MR. BARTES was accompanied by his attorney MR. PELIER, and the interview was conducted in a manner generally designed to establish rapport with MR. BARTES and to obtain other and more specific information from him at a later date.

For the last several days close contact has been maintained with MR. BARTES which resulted in the following information.

Director of
MR. BARTES was appointed the New Orleans Division of the CONCEJO REVOLUCIONARIO DE CUBA (Cuban Revolutionary Council) on the 8th of November 1962. He was appointed by the heads of this organization out of Miami and replaced MR. LUIS RABLE who had left this city for employment in Venezuela. (See attachment No. 1)

Prior to this time this organization had been headed by SERGIO ARCACHA SMITH who abandoned this organization and left the City of New Orleans after he had gotten into trouble for misusing funds that this organization was collecting. Earlier in 1962 ARCACHA had had some large coins minted symbolizing the Cuban Revolutionary Movement and had advertised these coins for sale for \$1.00 (actually the idea was that a coin would be sent to every person making a donation to ARCACHA's treasury). It was later learned that ARCACHA had formed his own organization called CRUSADE TO FREE CUBA and was channeling funds into that organization for his own use as well as using that organization as an outlet for the aforementioned coins. After taking over the New Orleans operation of the Cuban Revolutionary Council MR. BARTES discovered certain letters and cash donations that had been improperly made and returned these to the United States Post Office Department in New Orleans for return to sender. (See attachment No. 2)

MR. BARTES stated that when he took over the Cuban Revolutionary Council in November of 1962 membership lists had been prepared for the New Orleans Division and that these membership lists remained essentially the same for the New Orleans area. (See attachment No. 3) During the period of his administration MR. BARTES had two informal meetings of the Council at his home and the

persons he remembers as attending these meetings at his home are indicated by a check mark next to their name on attachment No. 3. According to MR. BARTES, MR. LAWRENCE LABORDE of this City would occasionally come to the meetings of the Revolutionary Council but MR. BARTES does not recall having MR. LABORDE in his home at any time to attend a meeting of the Council.

MR. BARTES recalls that MR. LABORDE introduced him to JERRY PATRICK HEMMING and to HOWARD DAVIS in late 1962 but he does not recall whether LABORDE brought these two men to his home for the introduction or whether the introduction was made elsewhere. He does recall however that on one occasion JERRY PATRICK HEMMING and HOWARD DAVIS came to his (BARTES') residence to try to obtain funds for a training camp in the Covington area and to locate a site for the training camp. MR. BARTES was not able to assist in obtaining funds for this project but states that he did fly over the Covington area with HEMMING and DAVIS in an attempt to locate a suitable training area in early 1963 and in an aircraft rented from the Pan-Air Corporation located at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport. He recalls that HOWARD DAVIS piloted the aircraft and that the conversation indicated that the training area, if one could be located, would be used to train a team of men to blow up the Shell Oil Refinery in Havana Harbor. BARTES expected that this operation had the sanction and support of our State Department and/or the CIA but later learned, through his superiors in Miami, that it was a private project of HEMMING and DAVIS, and the end result was that it was not given the support of the Cuban Revolutionary Council.

MR. BARTES states that this was his only experience with HEMMING and DAVIS and that he saw nothing more of them after that one flight to Covington.

MR. BARTES states that he never truly committed himself to the overt military revolutionary activities of the Cuban exiles primarily because his mother was at that time in Cuba and lived in daily fear of arrest. MR. BARTES stated that he contented himself with the limited activities of conducting Council meetings, organizing national and international representation, and making talks to luncheon groups urging the support of a free Cuba. According to MR. BARTES, even this limited activity was at a calculated risk to his family in Cuba. (International representation, see attachment No. 4)

Concerning the speeches and press releases made by MR. BARTES, he stated that he had once been mis-quoted by the Times-Picayune Newspaper and that the result of the mis-quote made it appear as though he had insulted the American people. After a lengthy and unpleasant meeting with the editor of that newspaper a retraction was printed (see attachment No. 5).

During this period MR. BARTES sent a registered letter to the President of the United States dated 10/18/63 in which he outlined the grievances of the Cuban exiles (see attachment NO. 6) which letter was never answered. Similar letters were

sent to a variety of United States Senators, many of whom responded (see attachment NO. 7).

For his work with the Cuban Revolutionary Council MR. BARTES was commended by the Miami headquarters by letter of August 9, 1963 (see attachment No. 8).

Immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy, MR. BARTES prepared a one-page statement on behalf of the Cuban Revolutionary Council of New Orleans and asked the WDSU television station for permission to read this statement to the American people. The authorities at WDSU-TV examined the statement prepared by MR. BARTES and refused to allow him to present it. (see attachment No. 9)

As to his past personal history, MR. BARTES stated that he had been president and major stockholder of a railroad corporation in Cuba and that their operations were sufficiently large to cover the island from one end to the other. He stated that his duties required him to travel frequently from one end of the island to the other and that for this purpose the corporation purchased a twin-engined aircraft which he then learned to fly. After coming to the United States as a Cuban refugee MR. BARTES operated a washateria in this City from 1961 to 1963. Subsequently MR. BARTES was a real estate salesman in 1963 through 1964 for TED ANDREWS and FRED WEBBER real estate agencies and continued in this work up to December 7, 1965.

In mid-1965 MR. BARTES began taking flying instructions at the Pan-Air Corporation located at the Lakefront Airport for the purpose of qualifying to fly in the United States in compliance with the regulations of the Federal Aeronautics Commission. He obtained a commercial license to fly in the United States which remains valid to this date. During the period that MR. BARTES was taking flight instruction at Pan-Air Corporation he corresponded with the man he had formerly employed as aircraft pilot for the Cuban railroad corporation. In the correspondence, the railroad company pilot indicated to MR. BARTES that he, (the pilot) was about to leave for the African Congo to fly fighter planes as a mercenary in the Congolese Airforce. MR. BARTES wrote back to his former pilot and indicated that he too would like to make arrangements to fly as a mercenary in the Congolese Airforce and after a brief period of time the former pilot arranged for MR. BARTES to do so.

On December 7, 1965 Mr. BARTES departed the United States for the African Congo where he spent 3 months flying fighter planes on strafing and ground support missions.

In February 1966 MR. BARTES returned to New Orleans and was employed by the Foundation Life Insurance Company where he remained for 3 months and then moved to the Medallion Realty Company where he is employed to this date as a real estate salesman.

MR. BARTES has applied for employment in the United States Department of State as an ~~Escort~~ Interpreter for foreign dignitaries visiting this country. MR. BARTES is scheduled to fly to Washington D. C. on the weekend of July 29, 1967 for final interviews and testing concerning this employment with the State Department.

MR. BARTES has been shown a variety of photographs of persons connected with this investigation and he was able to identify only those photographs of JERRY PATRICK HEMMING and of SERGIO ARCACHA SMITH. Concerning the photograph of SEYMOUR, MR. BARTES was able to make only a tentative identification and stated that he was not certain but that he thought he had seen the individual before. Concerning the photograph of HALL, MR. BARTES stated that the photograph resembled an individual who had come into his washateria to see him and had brought a message from JERRY PATRICK HEMMING but that he was not completely sure of the identification and that he had had no relations with HALL other than to receive the message from MR. HEMMING.

MR. BARTES stated that during his entire connection with the Cuban Revolutionary Movement he had maintained rather close liaison with the local agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that he would call on them occasionally and they would call on him rather frequently. MR. BARTES had a vague recollection of another Cuban training camp in the Covington area that had involved HOWARD DAVIS but said that he could obtain more accurate data on this camp from some old material that he had saved in his records and that this information would be delivered to this office as soon as possible upon his return from Washington.

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Basically, MR. BARTES wants to be a friend of this office and do whatever he can to help us in our inquiry into the Kennedy assassination. He is able to provide us with a variety of background material into the Cuban Revolutionary activities, including activities of JERRY PATRICK HEMMING and an organization known as "INTER PEN" (See attachment No. 10) but, at this time, I rather doubt that he knows anything too specific concerning the actual assassination of the President.

Concerning his participation in the Congolese Airforce as a mercenary, MR. BARTES showed me several photographs of the airplanes he flew and showed me the identification card issued to him by the Congolese Government, which card identified BARTES as a citizen of Venezuela. He stated that over 90 per cent of the Congolese pilots were Cubans who had been recruited as mercenaries but that none of them were permitted to admit to their Cuban nationality.

MR. BARTES was reluctant to admit (and he never did admit) that the recruitment of Cuban pilots for the Congolese Airforce was a CIA operation but he indicated, in a roundabout manner, that he knew that he had been actually working under the auspices of the United States Government.

Liaison will be maintained with MR. BARTES and further information will be obtained.

WILLIAM R. MARTIN